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THE IMPLICATIONS OF FRAMING EFFECTS FOR CITIZEN COMPETENCE

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Social scientists have documented framing effects in a wide range of contexts, including surveys, experiments, and actual political campaigns. Many view work on framing effects as evidence of citizen incompetence—that is, evidence that citizens base their preferences on arbitrary information and/or are subject to extensive elite manipulation. Yet, we continue to lack a consensus on what a framing effect is as well as an understanding of how and when framing effects occur. In this article, I examine (1) the different ways that scholars have employed the concepts of framing and framing effects, (2) how framing effects may violate some basic criteria of citizen competence, and (3) what we know about how and when framing effects work. I conclude that while the evidence to date suggests some isolated cases of incompetence, the more general message is that citizens use frames in a competent and well-reasoned manner.

Key words: framing effects; competence; public opinion; mass communication; behavioral decision theory.

For nearly half of a century, social scientists have shown that citizens' political judgments often depend on how an issue or problem is framed. For example, people's opinions about a Ku Klux Klan rally can depend on whether it is framed as a free speech or public safety issue. Alternatively, people's preferences over different social policies to combat a disease can depend on whether the policies are framed in terms of saving lives or losing lives. Examples of these types of framing effects abound. What do framing effects imply about citizen competence?

Some see the very existence of framing effects as evidence of citizen incompetence. As Zaller (1992) explains, "Framing and symbol manipulation by elites are sometimes discussed in conspiratorial tones, as if, in a healthy democratic polity, they would not occur" (p. 95; see also, Bartels, 1998; Edelman,

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1993; Entman, 1993, p. 57; Farr, 1993, p. 386; Manheim, 1991, pp. 4–5; Page and Shapiro, 1992, pp. 366–367; Parenti, 1999, pp. 123–124; Riker, 1986). This conclusion about competence stems, in large part, from a pair of widely held conjectures: (1) framing effects imply that citizens base their political preferences on arbitrary information, and (2) elites often use framing to manipulate citizens' judgments. In what follows, I discuss the evidence for and against these conjectures. In short, I assess the implications of framing effects for citizen competence.

The essay proceeds as follows. First, I explain what the terms "frames," "framing," and "framing effects" mean and discuss how the concepts have been used. This is particularly important because scholars often use the terms in different and conflicting ways, with little recognition of the multiple uses. Second, I derive basic criteria for evaluating citizen competence. Third, I examine the various ways in which framing effects have been said to violate these criteria. I then turn to alternative portrayals that suggest that the violations may not be as problematic as often thought. I find that while the evidence to date suggests some isolated cases of incompetence, the more general message is that citizens use frames in a competent and well-reasoned manner.

FRAMES, FRAMING, AND FRAMING EFFECTS

> Unfortunately, the writings of social psychologists on this subject reveal a loose mixture of meanings for the term "frame of reference." (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1954, p. 270)

> The heightened interest in frames in both the scholarly and popular literature . . . conceals a lack of conceptual clarity and consistency about what exactly frames are and how they influence public opinion. (Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson, 1997b, p. 222)

Work on frames and framing can be found throughout the social and cognitive sciences, as well as various subfields within political science. Indeed, scholars of social movements, bargaining behavior, foreign policy decision making, jury decision making, media effects, political psychology, public opinion and voting, campaigns, and many others use the concept of framing. Perhaps as a result of such widespread usage, the terms frame and framing typically evade precise and consistent definition.

Consider, for example, the following definitions of *frame* and *framing*:

- I assume that definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events—at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify. That is my definition of frame. (Goffman, 1974, pp. 10–11)

- Frames are principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters. (Gitlin, 1980, p. 6)

- We use the term "decision frame" to refer to the decision-maker's conception of the acts, outcomes, and contingencies associated with a particular choice. (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981, p. 453)

- A frame provides "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frames suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue." (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987, p. 143)

- The concept of framing refers to subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of judgment and choice problems. (Iyengar, 1991, p. 11)

- Our general human cognitive capacities appear to include the ability (and the need) to set up **frames**, or structured understandings of the way aspects of the world function (Goffman, 1974, Fillmore, 1985) (Sweetser and Fauconnier, 1996, p. 5; emphasis in original).

- A general definition of framing seems to reduce to "the way the story is written or produced," including the orienting headlines, the specific words choices, the rhetorical devices employed, the narrative form, and so on. (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997, p. 39).

These definitions reveal two distinct uses of the terms frame and framing. First, some use the terms to refer to the words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that a speaker uses when relaying information to another, or what can be called *frames in communication* (Cappella and Jamieson, Gitlin, Iyengar). The frame that the speaker chooses may reveal what the speaker sees as relevant to the topic at hand (Gamson and Modigliani, Gitlin). For example, a politician who emphasizes economic issues when discussing the campaign uses an "economy frame" that suggests economic considerations are pertinent.

This usage is particularly prominent among scholars who analyze trends in elite discourse. For example, Gamson and Modigliani (1987) show that, over time, opponents of affirmative action shifted from using an undeserved advantage frame to a reverse discrimination frame. That is, the discourse changed from questions such as "have African Americans earned or do they deserve special rights?" to the question of "is it fair to sacrifice the rights of whites to advance the well-being of African Americans?" (see also, Ball-Rokeach, Power, Guthrie, and Waring, 1990; Gamson and Lasch, 1983; Gamson and Modigliani, 1989; Pan and Kosicki, 1993; Patterson, 1993; Simon, 2001).

Others use the terms frame and framing to refer to an individual's (cogni-

tive) understanding of a given situation, or what can be called *frames in thought* (e.g., Goffman, Sweetser and Fauconnier, Tversky and Kahneman). In this case, a frame is not a property of a communication, but rather describes an individual's perception of a situation; the frame reveals what an individual sees as relevant to understanding a situation. For example, an individual who evaluates candidates based on their economic issue positions is said to be in an economic frame of mind (see, Chong, 1993; Gamson, 1992; Krosnick, 1988; Nelson et al., 1997b; van der Plight and Eiser, 1984).

Frames in communication and frames in thought are similar in that they both are concerned with variations in emphasis or salience. However, they differ in that the former usage focuses on what a speaker says (e.g., the aspects of an issue emphasized in elite discourse), while the latter usage focuses on what an individual is thinking (e.g., the aspects of an issue a citizen thinks are most important). This distinction parallels Kinder and Sanders' (1990, p. 74, 1996, p. 164) comparison between frames "embedded in political discourse" and frames that "are internal structures of the mind" as well as Scheufele's (1999) discussion of "media frames" and "individual frames" (also see Entman, 1991, 1993; Kinder, 1998, p. 173).

Of course, frames in communication often play an important role in shaping frames in thought. This process—which is the focus of this article—is typically called a *framing effect*.[1] Work on framing effects has evolved into two distinct literatures that examine different types of framing effects (Jones, 2001, p. 103; Lau, Smith, and Fiske, 1991, p. 645; Sniderman and Theriault, 1999, pp. 5–6).

One type, which I refer to as an *equivalency framing effect*, examines how the use of different, but logically equivalent, words or phrases (e.g., 5% unemployment or 95% employment, 97% fat-free or 3% fat) causes individuals to alter their preferences. Traditionally, equivalency framing effects occur when frames that cast "the same critical information in either a *positive* or a *negative* light" cause individuals to have different preferences (Levin, Schneider, and Gaeth, 1998, p. 150; emphasis in original).

For example, in their widely cited experiment, Tversky and Kahneman (1981, 1987) asked one group of respondents to respond to Problem 1:

> Imagine that the U.S. is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the exact scientific estimates of the consequences of the programs are as follows:
>
> If Program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved.
>
> If Program B is adopted, there is a 1/3 probability that 600 people will be saved, and a 2/3 probability that no people will be saved.

Which of the two programs would you favor?

____ Program A   ____ Program B

Notice that the two programs have the same expected value of saving 200 people. Program A differs from Program B in that Program A constitutes a risk-averse choice—the outcome is certain and there is no risk, while Program B constitutes a risk-seeking choice—the outcome is uncertain and there is a risky gamble. In this case, Tversky and Kahneman find that 72% of the respondents chose Program A. They asked another group of respondents to respond to Problem 2, which differs from Problem 1 only in the choice of alternatives. This time, respondents faced the following choice:

If Program A is adopted, 400 people will die.

If Program B is adopted, there is a 1/3 probability that nobody will die, and a 2/3 probability that 600 people will die.

These programs are equivalent to those offered in Problem 1 except they are framed in terms of the number of people dying instead of the number of people being saved (as in Problem 1). In this case, Tversky and Kahneman find that 78% of the respondents chose Program B—the risk-seeking alternative. The importance of this result is that individuals' preferences change (by 50%) due to alternative frames even though the objective outcomes and their descriptions remain equivalent (see also, Dawes, 1988, pp. 34–47; Kühberger, 1998; Kühberger, Schulte-Mecklenbeck, and Pernu, 1999; McCaffrey, Kahneman, and Spitzer, 1995; Quattrone and Tversky, 1988).

Other work on equivalency framing effects examines specific evaluations or behaviors, rather than risk preferences.[2] For example, individuals may evaluate a new economic program more favorably when it is described as resulting in 95% employment than when it is described as resulting in 5% unemployment (e.g., Quattrone and Tversky, 1988). Alternatively, Meyerowitz and Chaiken (1987) show that women who were told that not performing a breast self-examination decreases the chance of finding a treatable tumor were more likely to engage in examinations than women who were told that performing an examination increases the chance of finding a treatable tumor (see also, Tykocinski, Higgins, and Chaiken, 1994).

As mentioned, most of the literature on equivalency framing effects focuses on the impact of positive or negative portrayals of the same information. Some scholars, however, equate this work with survey question wording effects (e.g., Bartels, 1998; Lacy, 1997; Zaller, 1992, p. 33). An example of a wording effect

is that in the mid-1970s, 44 to 48% of Americans would "not allow" a Communist to give a speech, while only about 22% would "forbid" him or her from doing so, despite the fact that most "people would probably acknowledge that 'forbidding' an action is substantively *equivalent* to 'not allowing' it" (Bartels, 1998, p. 22; Schuman and Presser, 1981, p. 277; emphasis added). More recently, a majority of citizens expressed a preference "to use military force" at the start of the Gulf War, while the same majority also expressed a preference not "to engage in combat" (Mueller, 1994, p. 30). It seems reasonable to include survey question wording effects as an example of equivalency framing effects (Levin et al., 1998, p. 166), as long as it can be clearly established that the alternative wordings are in fact objectively or logically equivalent, and that it is not a matter of asking different questions.[3]

The other type of framing effect—which I refer to as an *emphasis framing effect*—shows that by emphasizing a subset of potentially relevant considerations, a speaker can lead individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions. For example, when a candidate frames a campaign in economic terms, it may cause voters to evaluate candidates based on their economic policies. This, in turn, may lead voters to prefer the candidate with the stronger economic policy. In contrast, if the candidate focuses on foreign affairs policy, voters may do the same and, as a result, support the candidate with the stronger foreign affairs policy. Like equivalency framing effects, emphasis framing effects work by causing individuals to focus on certain aspects or characterizations of an issue or problem instead of others. However, unlike equivalency framing effects, the frames in communication for emphasis framing effects are not logically identical ways of making the same statement; rather, the frames focus on different potentially relevant considerations (see Nelson, 2000, for discussion of various types of emphasis framing).

Scholars have focused on two aspects of emphasis framing effects (Druckman, 2001a; Sniderman and Theriault, 1999, p. 7). Some investigate how different frames lead individuals to base their opinions on different considerations with little attention to overall opinions. For example, Kinder and Sanders (1990) show that an undeserved advantage frame leads Caucasian individuals to oppose affirmative action due in large part to racial considerations (e.g., racial prejudice). When shown a reverse discrimination frame, individuals still oppose affirmative action; however, in this case, they base their decision on their direct interests (e.g., how threatening they believe affirmative action would be to Caucasian educational, economic, and group interests); (see Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Nelson and Kinder, 1996).[4] Others examine how different frames alter overall opinions with less attention to the underlying considerations. Sniderman and Theriault (1999) show, for example, that when government spending for the poor is framed as enhancing the chance that poor people can get ahead, individuals tend to support increased spending.

However, when it is framed as resulting in higher taxes, individuals tend to oppose increased spending (Haider-Markel and Joslyn, 2001a). Of course, these two aspects of emphasis framing effects are highly related, as emphasis framing changes overall opinion by causing an individual to alter the considerations on which his or her opinion is based (Berelson et al., 1954, pp. 253–273; Scheufele, 1999, p. 117).[5]

In some cases, distinguishing the two types of framing effects is not straightforward. Take for example, work on survey question ordering—a phenomenon that many consider to be a framing effect (Bishop, Oldendick, and Tuchfarber, 1982; Lacy, 1997; Sears and Lau, 1983; Tourangeau, Rasinski, Bradburn, and D'Andrado, 1989; Zaller, 1992). A classic example is that when asked if "the United States should let Communist newspaper reporters from other countries come in here and send back to their papers the news as they see it," only 36% of respondents replied yes. This number increased to 73%, however, when respondents answered the same question after answering another question that asked if "a Communist country like Russia should let American newspaper reporters come in and send back to America the news as they see it" (Hyman and Sheatsley, 1950; Schuman and Presser, 1981, pp. 28–29). This could be treated as a case of an equivalency framing effect because respondents answered the same exact question differently, depending on question order. However, a more accurate classification probably would define the block of two questions as the unit of analysis, with different question orderings constituting different frames. With this treatment, question order effects are more akin to emphasis framing effects. When asked the first question in isolation, respondents base their responses on pro-American or anti-Communist considerations; however, when the second question precedes the first, a norm of evenhandedness—which is a substantively different consideration and not a logically equivalent statement of the same information—becomes more salient in the minds of respondents (Schuman and Ludwig, 1983; Schuman and Presser, 1981, p. 28).[6]

I next assess the implications of equivalency framing effects and emphasis framing effects for citizen competence. In the course of this discussion, the usefulness of distinguishing the two types of framing effects from one another will become apparent—specifically, they have unique implications for citizen competence, involve different psychological processes, and work under varying conditions.[7]

DEFINING CITIZEN COMPETENCE

> Everyone would have to know definitely what he wants to stand for. (Schumpeter, 1942, p. 253)

Competence refers to the "state or condition of being competent" and competent means "properly or well qualified; capable" (*American Heritage Dictionary*, 1983, pp. 142–143). A basic conception of democratic competence, then, requires that citizens be well qualified or capable to meet their assigned role. Their assigned role, in turn, concerns the expression of their preferences to which governors can and should respond. As Dahl (1971, p. 1) explains, "a key characteristic of a democracy is the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens." Thus, competent citizens must be "capable" of forming preferences.

This definition of citizen competence begs the questions of "what is a preference?" and "what does it mean to be 'well qualified' or 'capable'?" A preference can be defined as "a comparative evaluation of (i.e., a ranking over) a set of objects" (Druckman and Lupia, 2000, p. 2). For example, imagine that an individual faces a choice between two alternatives—Policy A and Policy B. In this case, the individual may prefer Policy A to Policy B, prefer Policy B to Policy A, or be indifferent between Policy A and Policy B. Preferences such as these derive, in part, from evaluations of the set of objects (e.g., evaluations of or attitudes toward Policy A and Policy B; Druckman and Lupia, 2000, pp. 4–5).

The second question—"what does it mean to be 'well qualified' or 'capable' to form a preference?"—goes to heart of debates about citizen competence. Indeed, it remains unclear what it takes to form preferences in a capable or well-qualified manner. Some argue, for example, that competent preferences must be based on copious information (Somin, 1998); others disagree and instead focus on the effective use of heuristics or information shortcuts (Lupia and McCubbins, 1998); and yet others examine such things as issue constraint and stability or ideological understanding (Converse, 1964, 2000; also see Kuklinski, Quirk, Jerit, Schwieder, and Rich, 2000, pp. 791–792 for an interesting discussion). While all of these and many other dimensions undoubtedly play some role in citizen competence, I focus on two basic requisites of capable preference formation. The two requisites seem fairly noncontroversial and, more importantly, are most relevant to research on framing effects.

The first requisite is that competent citizens' preferences should not be based on arbitrary aspects of how an issue or problem is described. This idea has been formalized in the concept of preference invariance that requires that "preferences do not depend upon arbitrary features of the context, formulation, or procedure used to elicit those preferences" (Bartels, 1998, p. 7; also see Arrow, 1982, p. 6, Tversky and Kahneman, 1987). Invariance is violated, for example, when an individual prefers Policy A to Policy B when asked if he or she "prefers Policy A or B," and then prefers Policy B to Policy A when asked if he or she "favors Policy B or Policy A." Preferences based on such arbitrary information undoubtedly have little connection to actual citizens' de-

sires and interests (see Bartels, 1998, pp. 5–7; Tversky and Thaler, 1990, pp. 203, 210).[8] Moreover, failure to have invariant preferences constitutes a problem for democratic responsiveness—indeed, what should government officials do if they find that most citizens respond "yes" when asked if they prefer Policy A to B, and then the same citizens also respond "yes" when asked if they favor Policy B to Policy A? How can governors possibly be responsive?

The second requisite is that competent citizens' preferences should not be the product of elite manipulation. Manipulation occurs when an elite influences a citizen's preference in a deleterious way, meaning, for example, that the influence induces preferences that either are based on incorrect or biased information (Page and Shapiro, 1992, p. 356), differ from what preferences would be if they were based on the best available information (Zaller, 1992, p. 313), or cause the person to act against his or her interests (Lupia and McCubbins, 1998, p. 70). In practice, scholars who want to identify cases of manipulation, using any of these standards, face numerous obstacles. For example, how do we know what information is "unbiased," what preferences would be if the individual had the "best available information," or what an individual's "interests" actually are? Put another way, identifying cases of manipulation requires an assessment of the counterfactual of what preferences would be under other, often ill-defined circumstances.

I sidestep these problems by focusing on the process through which elite influence works. If elite influence occurs automatically such that citizens subconsciously form preferences in accordance with elite discourse, then citizens will nearly always be vulnerable to manipulation. In this scenario, citizens do not form preferences capably; they are at the mercy of elites' whims, having few if any defenses against manipulation. This focus on automatic or subconscious influence parallels early work on media effects that worried that elite influence worked "like a hypodermic stimulus on an inert subject" (Berelson et al. 1954: 234).[9]

FRAMING EFFECTS AND CITIZEN COMPETENCE

> The question whether these [competency] conditions are fulfilled to the extent required in order to make democracy work should not be answered by reckless assertion or equally reckless denial. It can be answered only by a laborious appraisal of a maze of conflicting evidence. (Schumpeter, 1942, p. 254)

In this section, I assess the implications of framing effects for citizen competence. First, I review work suggesting that the existence of framing effects indicates citizen incompetence. I then turn to some responses that provide a more optimistic portrayal.

Framing Effects = Citizen Incompetence

> [Framing] seems to raise radical doubts about democracy itself. If by shaping frames elites can determine the major manifestations of "true" public opinion that are available to government (via polls or voting), what can true public opinion be? How can even sincere democratic representatives respond correctly to public opinion when empirical evidence of it appears to be so malleable, so vulnerable to framing effects? (Entman, 1993, p. 57)

The first criterion of citizen competence requires that citizens not base their preferences on arbitrary information. Information qualifies as arbitrary when it is "contingent solely upon one's discretion" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, 1987, p. 107). In the case of equivalency framing, the frames differ due to arbitrary variations in information insofar as there is no logical or objective justification for one frame or another; they contain the exact same information (e.g., 95% employment or 5% unemployment; see Rabin, 1998). A speaker thus has complete discretion in choosing which frame to use.

Consistent with this interpretation, many cite equivalency framing effects as a paradigmatic violation of preference invariance (Tversky and Kahneman, 1987). The implication is that equivalency framing effects render peoples' preferences uninterpretable. For example, when people prefer an economic program described as resulting in 95% employment but then oppose the same program when told that it will result in 5% unemployment, it is impossible to determine if they support or oppose the program (i.e., the preferences are irreconcilable). It would be nonsensical to argue that people's preferences changed because they came to believe that avoiding 5% unemployment is more important than ensuring 95% employment, or vice versa.

Equivalency framing effects also raise concerns about elite manipulation. Levin et al. (1998) find that many equivalency framing effects work through automatic, subconscious processes—for example, by subtly priming a positive or negative tone of evaluation (e.g., the unemployment-employment example), or by generating a negativity bias where negative information has a systematically stronger impact on judgment than objectively equivalent positive information (e.g., the breast self-examination example). This suggests that elites may able to manipulate citizens by strategically employing alternative, but equivalent, frames (Kahneman and Tversky, 1984, p. 346). In this case, people are manipulated to base their preferences on different pieces of arbitrary information.

Many social scientists do not view these effects as isolated cases of incompetence, but rather as symptomatic of a routine failure of citizens to form competent preferences. In his insightful essay on equivalency framing effects,

Bartels (1998, p. 24) states that there is "little basis for supposing that even well-informed, well-thought-out opinions are likely to be immune from [equivalency] framing effects" (see also, Iyengar, 1991, p. 13; Quattrone and Tversky, 1988).

Most agree that emphasis framing effects also occur with some regularity—for example, Chong (1993, p. 870) explains that these types of framing effects constitute "the essence of public opinion formation." Indeed, much of politics involves battles over how a campaign, a problem, or an issue should be understood. This can be seen in debates over issues such as campaign finance (free speech or democratic corruption?), abortion (rights of mother or rights of unborn child?), gun control (right to bear arms or public safety?), affirmative action (reverse discrimination or remedial action?), welfare policy (humanitarianism or overspending?), hate group rallies (free speech or public safety?), and many more (Freedman, 2000).

Unlike equivalency framing effects, emphasis framing effects do not suggest that people base their preferences on arbitrary information; they do not violate preference invariance. People might shift, for example, from supporting a hate group's right to rally to opposing it because they come to believe that public safety concerns trump free speech. In this case, people's preferences do not change because a single piece of information is described positively or negatively (or in otherwise equivalent terms), but rather because a substantively different consideration is brought to bear on the issue at hand. It would be quite reasonable to conclude that they have a deliberate preference not to allow the rally (i.e., the change is not due to arbitrary information).

Emphasis framing effects do, however, raise concerns about elite manipulation. The manipulation argument is based on a presumption that emphasis framing effects work through a passive accessibility process (Allen, O'Loughlin, Jasperson, and Sullivan, 1994, p. 266; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997, pp. 58–86; Chong, 1993, p. 869; Iyengar, 1990, 1991, pp. 130–136; Mendelsohn, 1996, p. 113; Zaller, 1992, pp. 83–84). In this portrayal, people are said to automatically and subconsciously base their political judgments on whichever considerations happen to be accessible in memory. Moreover, a political or media elite can increase the accessibility of certain considerations (and thereby alter opinions) by frequently and/or recently using a frame.[10] For example, if an individual frequently hears a candidate framing the campaign in terms of foreign affairs, then foreign affairs considerations become more accessible in the individual's mind, and as a result, the individual is likely to base his or her candidate evaluation on foreign affairs issues. Nelson et al. (1997b) explain that accessibility models "portray the individual as rather mindless, as automatically incorporating into the final attitude whatever ideas happen to pop into mind" (p. 237).

If emphasis framing effects work through accessibility where citizens follow

virtually any frame they hear, then citizens have few defenses against elites who use frames to manipulate their preferences. Miller and Krosnick (1996) explain that such a scenario harks "back to the first phase of media research, in which citizens were viewed as passive recipients of 'hypodermic' injections" (p. 96). Similarly, in his assessment of the literature, Farr (1993) states, "what is unclear is that frames could be *anything but* manipulative" (p. 386; emphasis in original; also see Entman, 1993, p. 57; Kinder and Herzog, 1993, p. 363; Riker, 1986; Sniderman and Theriault, 1999, pp. 31–32; Zaller, 1992, pp. 45, 311).

Framing Effects ≠ Citizen Incompetence

There are limits to framing. (Popkin, 1994, p. 83)

Framing effects raise serious concerns about widespread citizen incompetence. However, not everyone agrees that framing effects imply that citizens generally lack invariant preferences or that elites often manipulate citizens' judgments. I present these perspectives by discussing limits to equivalency framing effects and emphasis framing effects, respectively.

Limits to Equivalency Framing Effects

Equivalency framing effects, when they occur, challenge citizen competency; but just how often do they occur? A cursory glance of political science discussions of these effects suggests that they are pervasive. Indeed, virtually no one cites cases where equivalency framing effects do not work (e.g., Entman, 1993; Quattrone and Tversky, 1988; Zaller, 1992).

This is unfortunate insofar as there exists a highly relevant literature in psychology devoted to explaining equivalency framing effects and their limits. While some of this work has failed to replicate classic equivalency framing effects (e.g., Fagley and Miller, 1997, p. 359), the more general lesson is that the effects predictably occur, but only under very specific conditions. These conditions include individual level variables, procedural and problem characteristics, and contextual circumstances. For example, the effects are less likely to occur when the respondent is a male (Fagley and Miller, 1990, 1997), has high cognitive ability (Stanovich and West, 1998), has strongly held attitudes or high personal involvement in the issue at hand (Levin et al., 1998, p. 160), or briefly thinks about his or her decision (Takemura, 1994; also see Kowert and Hermann, 1997, on personality variations). Moreover, framing effects tend to disappear when a decision maker provides a rationale for his or her decision (Fagley and Miller, 1987; Miller and Fagley, 1991; Sieck and Yates,

1997) and also are sensitive to problem details such as specific probabilities, amounts, and task domain (see, e.g., Bohm and Lind, 1992; Levin and Chapman, 1990; Kühberger, 1995; Kühberger et al., 1999; Wang, 1996). Interestingly, the wording, probabilities, and amounts used in Tversky and Kahneman's widely cited Asian disease framing experiment produce one of the strongest framing effects ever documented (Kühberger, 1998, p. 45; Levin et al., 1998, p. 157). Context also matters. For example, Bless, Betsch and Franzen (1998) replicate the Asian disease experiment when they tell subjects that it is a "medical research" problem, but find no effects when they tell subjects it is a "statistical research" problem (also see Schwarz, 1996).

These results reveal the fragility and heterogeneity of equivalency framing effects: they occur less frequently than many believe (Miller and Fagley, 1991, p. 517), and the overall evidence for them is "mixed" (Fagley and Miller, 1997, p. 357; also see Wang, 1996, p. 146). This contradicts many portrayals that treat the effects as "pervasive" (Kahneman and Tversky, 1984, p. 343) and robust across people and issues (Bartels, 1998; Iyengar, 1991, p. 13; also see Sniderman, 2000, p. 76). The implication is that, given the research to date, examples of equivalency framing effects do no more than suggest the possibility of incompetence among some people on some issues in some contexts. General statements about equivalency framing effects and incompetence cannot be supported, at least until a concerted effort is made to directly examine the limits of these effects in political contexts. At this point, the evidence does no more than demonstrate isolated cases of political incompetence.

One of the few attempts to theorize about limits to equivalency framing effects in political contexts comes from Sniderman (2000; also see Jackman and Sniderman, 1999). He argues that most political choices fundamentally differ from the typical equivalency framing effect problem, and thus, these effects are not indicative of how people make political decisions (also see Riker, 1995, pp. 33–35; Schattschneider, 1960, p. 134, Wittman, 1995, pp. 41–45).[11] Sniderman (2000) explains that the "decision-theoretic [framing] task conspicuously is complex; the public opinion choice strikingly simplified. What matters as much are the ways public choice is simplified" (p. 77).

The basic idea is that many important political choices are clearly defined and simplified by competing political parties or other elite organizations; citizens know which parties support which alternatives. Moreover, many people have well developed preferences towards parties or other elites (e.g., they know which party they prefer). Thus, they are able to make consistent choices and are less susceptible to framing effects—they simply opt for the alternative endorsed by their party. In short, the political context provides people with a few, simple decisionmaking cues that facilitate competent decision-making (i.e., the cues prevent people from basing their preferences on arbitrary information).

To empirically examine this argument, I implemented an experiment to test the hypothesis that the availability of simple cues, such as party endorsements, prevents people from being framed (Druckman, 2001b). The experiment consisted of two questionnaires administered to student respondents. On the first questionnaire, I acquired the respondents' party identification. On the second questionnaire, administered about three weeks after the first questionnaire, respondents answered either one of the two original Asian disease framing problems, or they answered a variation of that problem. The variation simply replaced the labels of the alternatives so that instead of choosing "Program A" or "Program B" (as in the original problem), respondents chose either the "Democrats' Program" or the "Republicans' Program," for example. Thus, the participants received different endorsements for the programs. These data can be used to examine if people base their preferences on the party cues instead of the arbitrary frames.

Table 1 displays the results. The first two rows replicate Tversky and Kahneman's original experiment. When no party cues are offered, respondents tend to prefer the risk-averse alternative when given a "save" frame and the risk-seeking alternative when given a "die" frame (using a difference of proportions test, $z = 4.53$, $p = .000$). The next two rows show that when "Program A" is replaced with the respondent's party (e.g., "Democrats' Program" for a Democratic respondent) and "Program B" is replaced with the opposition party (e.g., "Republicans' Program" for a Democratic respondent), the

TABLE 1. Party Cues and Framing Effects

Frame	Risk-Averse Alternative Label	Risk-Seeking Alternative Label	% Choosing Risk-Averse Alternative	% Choosing Risk-Seeking Alternative
Save ($N = 50$)	Program A	Program B	68	32
Die ($N = 55$)	Program A	Program B	24	76
Save ($N = 65$)	Respondent's Party	Opposition Party	74	26
Die ($N = 56$)	Respondent's Party	Opposition Party	59	41
Save ($N = 56$)	Opposition Party	Respondent's Party	29	71
Die ($N = 62$)	Opposition Party	Respondent's Party	18	82

Source: Druckman, 2001b.

influence of the frame significantly declines.[12] Indeed, 59% prefer the risk-averse alternative with their partisan label even when given a "die" frame (up from 24% when the label is "Program A," using a difference of proportions test, $z = 3.74$, $p = .000$). The final two rows demonstrate an even greater reduction in the framing effect. When the risk-averse alternative is labeled as the respondent's opposition party's program (e.g., "Republicans' Program" for a Democratic respondent), only 29% opt for the risk-averse alternative when given a save frame (down from 68% when the label is "Program A," using a difference of proportions test, $z = 4.01$, $p = .000$).

The importance of these results is that the political context leads people to base their preferences on systematic information rather than on arbitrary information contained in the frames (i.e., preference invariance is not violated). Party cues are not arbitrary because the different cues (e.g., Democrats or Republicans) are not synonymous with one another, and may in fact contain relevant contextual information.

Consistent with the psychological literature previously discussed, the results suggest that context can facilitate competent decision making. However, the results also raise the question of if one form of incompetence simply replaces another. Specifically, while people who rely on party cues avoid basing their preferences on arbitrary information, they also expose themselves to the possibility of elite manipulation. Whether elite manipulation has taken place depends on the psychological process underlying the use of party cues (e.g., whether or not it is conscious) and on the sources of party preferences.[13] Unfortunately, the data from the experiment are insufficient to address these issues, and thus, it is unclear if elite manipulation has occurred. Regardless of this, the more important point is that equivalency framing effects clearly are sensitive to context, and thus, generalizing them requires careful empirical demonstrations.

I close this section by briefly addressing survey question wording effects. As mentioned, many treat question wording effects as examples of equivalency framing effects in which case all of the limits touched on in this section are relevant. In addition, it is important that future research on question wording effects demonstrates that the alternative wordings are in fact logically or objectively equivalent (Frisch, 1993). While some examples clearly satisfy this requirement, others are less clear. For instance, some point to a wording effect where people favor increased government assistance to "poor people," but then oppose it for "people on welfare" (e.g., Bartels, 1998, pp. 18–19; Iyengar, 1991, p. 13). Yet, it seems quite reasonable to argue that "poor people" include many others besides "people on welfare." In this case, the two questions may be asking about related but distinct groups.

In sum, political science research on equivalency framing effects remains embryonic. More often than not, researchers cite classic examples of equiva-

lency framing and discuss their implications; they typically pay little attention to the political conditions under which these effects take place. The psychological literature along with Sniderman's argument about political context suggests that these conditions may be stringent, implying that equivalency framing effects do not signify widespread incompetence and instead demonstrate only isolated cases of incompetence. Of course, this is somewhat speculative, as we continue to know little about how and when equivalency framing effects work in political contexts.

Limits to Emphasis Framing Effects

Concern that elites use emphasis framing to manipulate citizens' preferences has led to work on how and when emphasis framing works. As discussed, a central element of the manipulation claim is that emphasis framing works through an automatic, subconscious accessibility process. Most who make the accessibility claim base it on a sizable social psychological literature (Allen et al., 1994, p. 268; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997; Iyengar, 1990, 1991, pp. 130–136; Price and Tewksbury, 1997; Zaller, 1992, pp. 48, 276).

One of the classic social psychological experiments on accessibility comes from Higgins, Rholes, and Jones (1977). They asked subjects to participate in two ostensibly unrelated experiments. In the first experiment, subjects took part in a subtle memorization task, part of which involved the memorization of a series of positive trait terms (e.g., adventurous and self-confident) or negative trait terms (e.g., reckless and stubborn). This task served to prime or increase the accessibility of positive or negative traits. In the second "unrelated" experiment, subjects were given a brief description of an ambiguously described person. The description explained that the person had driven in a demolition derby and rarely changes his mind about doing things, inter alia. Higgins et al. find that subjects who had been subtly primed with positive trait terms (such as adventurous and self-confident) tended to view the target person's behaviors positively while subjects who had been primed with negative trait terms (such as reckless and stubborn) construed the exact same behaviors negatively. A main point of the experiment is that subjects automatically based their judgments of the ambiguous stimulus on constructs that were subconsciously made accessible in the memorization task.[14]

The important and rarely noted point is that these accessibility experiments do not involve what is typically treated as (emphasis) framing. Instead of being exposed to a speaker discussing an issue with a focus on certain considerations, participants are typically induced to memorize certain words or constructs in a task that they believe has nothing to do with their subsequent judgment. Thus, while it is possible that accessibility mediates emphasis framing effects, the social psychology literature offers no direct evidence.

Moreover, in an impressive series of experiments, Nelson, Oxley, and their colleagues (1997a, 1998, 1999) find no evidence that framing works through accessibility. Rather, they show that emphasis framing effects work through a psychological process where individuals consciously and deliberately think about the relative importance of different considerations suggested by a frame. For example, instead of automatically basing their opinions about a Ku Klux Klan rally on whichever consideration—free speech or public safety—happens to be accessible in their minds due to the frame, people consciously think about the relative importance of different considerations suggested by the frame (Brewer, 2001; Nelson, 2000; Price and Tewksbury, 1997).[15]

If emphasis framing effects work through a more deliberate process, we would expect systematic limits to political manipulation: people will not follow any frame that they recently and/or frequently hear. Thus far, scholars have investigated five moderators of emphasis framing effects: predispositions, citizen deliberation, political information, source credibility, and competition. I discuss each of these, in turn.

In the course of deliberating about an elite's frame, people might compare the information contained in the frame with their own predispositions. This may lead them to reject a frame that contradicts their predispositions. Gross (2000) investigates this possibility using an experiment where she exposed participants to a news article about the 1992 Los Angeles race riots that used either a dispositional frame (i.e., blames individuals for the riot) or a situational frame (i.e., blames social conditions for the riot). She finds that individuals with unprejudiced predispositions not only reject the dispositional frame, but they become even more liberal in their race and social welfare opinions. Gross suggests that this reinforcement process occurs because people generate counterarguments in the face of a disagreeable frame. Brewer (2000) offers complementary evidence by showing that prior opinions about gay rights fundamentally shape individuals' reactions to and evaluations of alternative gay rights frames (also see Berinsky and Kinder, 2000, pp. 30–31; Federico, 2001; Haider-Markel and Joslyn, 2001a; Iyengar, 1991, pp. 117–123; Shah, Domke, and Wackman, 1996, p. 516). These results demonstrate that people do not simply base their preferences on recently and frequently heard elite frames. Rather, they evaluate elite frames in light of their existing predispositions (see Alvarez and Brehm, 2000, on ambivalent predispositions and framing; also see note 5).

Related to work on predispositions is Price and Na's (2000) finding on how a deliberative context can vitiate framing effects. Price and Na show that, on the issue of mayoral control of schools, citizens who participated in a deliberation forum (in Philadelphia) exhibit significantly less susceptibility to a subsequent framing effect (compared to citizens who did not participate). However, they fail to find an analogous effect for deliberation on the issue of cutting

the city's wage tax. These results suggest that, for some issues under certain conditions, citizens who engage in deliberative discussions develop stronger opinions that are less susceptible to subsequent framing effects (Price and Na, 2000, p. 9). As Price and Na point out, understanding the conditions under which deliberation will have this effect, and the precise mediational processes through which the effect works requires future research.

Kinder and Sanders (1990) investigate another potential moderator of emphasis framing effects—political information. Using National Election Study (NES) data, they show that those with less general political information are more susceptible to the framing of affirmative action policy. Kinder and Sanders explain that this occurs because better informed people "are more likely to be in possession of a frame of their own [and thus] will be less likely to be influenced by any particular frame imposed from the outside" (p. 90; also see Iyengar, 1991, p. 118). Similarly, Sniderman and Theriault (1999) find stronger framing effects on the less informed in two framing studies: one on spending on the poor and the other on a public rally by an extremist group (also see Haider-Markel and Joslyn's, 2001a, study of framing and handgun laws).

In another study, Nelson et al. (1997b) exposed student respondents either to a frame emphasizing how welfare is "a giveaway to the undeserving" or a frame emphasizing how welfare is a "harmful drain on the economy." People exposed to the former frame gave significantly more weight to their beliefs about the causes of poverty when deriving their overall opinions about welfare. In contrast to the just discussed studies, Nelson et al. find that the framing effect is much stronger among respondents with greater familiarity with welfare arguments. Nelson et al. suggest that their result may be due to the fact that framing works by altering the weight attached to different considerations held in long-term memory, and only the better informed people have this information in long-term memory. They replicate their results using a more general political knowledge measure and two framing examples from the NES (one concerning spending on the poor and the other concerning spending for AIDS; also see Miller and Krosnick, 2000, on media priming). Interestingly, however, they mimic Kinder and Sanders with a third NES example concerning affirmative action, finding stronger framing effects for the less knowledgeable respondents.[16]

Resolving these conflicting results has important implications for citizen competence. On the one hand, if less informed citizens exhibit more susceptibility to framing effects, the image is one of ill prepared citizens being swept away by manipulative elites. On the other hand, if framing tends to have a greater effect on more informed citizens, it suggests that political experts are choosing to rely on a source to help them figure out which frame is most relevant (Miller and Krosnick, 2000). Of course, it may be that the effect of

information varies based on the issue, type of information (i.e., general or domain specific), and other individual level variables. Understanding these variations is critical if we are to identify the individuals who are most susceptible to influence and manipulation.

If, as Nelson et al. (1997a) show, emphasis framing effects work through a deliberative psychological process, people may be selective in choosing whom to believe. I examined this possibility by implementing two experiments to test the hypothesis that a speaker can engage in successful framing only if his or her target audience believes the speaker is credible (i.e., trustworthy and knowledgeable about the issue; Druckman, 2001a).

In one of the experiments, participants read an article about a Ku Klux Klan request to hold a rally. The article used either a free speech frame or a public safety frame in discussing the Klan's request, and came from either a credible source (*New York Times*) or a noncredible source (*The National Enquirer*).[17] A framing effect would occur if participants who read a free speech article were significantly more tolerant of the rally and significantly more likely to base their opinions on free speech considerations than participants who read a public safety article. The source credibility hypothesis suggests that there will be a larger framing effect among participants who read articles from the *New York Times* than among participants who read articles from *The National Enquirer.*

I report the overall tolerance opinion results in Table 2, with higher scores (on a 7-point scale) indicating increased tolerance. The results support the source credibility hypothesis. The interaction between frame and source from an OLS regression is significant at the .068 level (for a one-tailed test; see Cohen and Cohen, 1983). When tolerance is treated as an ordinal variable, the interaction between frame and source from an ordered probit is significant at the .045 level. Moreover, the average score for participants who read *The New York Times* free speech article (4.22) is statistically significantly higher than the average score for participants who read *The New York Times* public safety article (2.56) ($t_{34} = 2.13$, $p = .020$). There is no significant difference among participants who read a *National Enquirer* article ($t_{32} = .07$, $p = .47$).

TABLE 2. Mean Seven Point Tolerance Scores By Condition

	Public Safety Frame	Free Speech Frame
New York Times	2.56 (SD = 2.12; N = 18)	4.22 (2.56; 18)
National Enquirer	3.35 (2.32; 17)	3.29 (2.52; 17)

Source: Druckman, 2001a.

Although not displayed, the results also show that the alternative frames affected the considerations underlying the tolerance judgments (e.g., the importance of free speech) only for participants who read a *New York Times* article.

These results suggest that rather than being manipulated by whichever frame they hear, people tend to delegate to credible sources to help them sort through the many possible frames. Put another way, under certain conditions, framing may be akin to a competent learning process rather than manipulation.[18]

A final moderating effect comes from competition over frames. Sniderman and Theriault (1999) argue that in many political contexts, people are not just exposed to one frame of an issue or problem—as in the conventional framing effect experiment—but rather, they are exposed to competing frames. To examine the effect of competing frames, Sniderman and Theriault implemented two experiments (embedded in a national survey) where participants were exposed either to one of two frames or to both frames. For example, participants received a statement about a public rally by an extremist group that used either a violent risk frame, a free speech frame, or both frames simultaneously.

They find a classic framing effect for participants exposed to just one frame, that is, those exposed to the violent risk frame generally oppose the rally and those exposed to free speech frame generally support allowing the rally. However, they also find that the framing effect disappears among participants simultaneously exposed to both frames; people exposed to both frames revert back to their prior underlying principles. For example, when individuals who are generally committed to freedom over order receive both frames, they revert to their general (freedom) principal and support allowing the rally. Sniderman and Theriault (1999) conclude, "when citizens can hear the clash of political argument the positions they take on specific issues are markedly more likely to be grounded in their underlying principles" (p. 26). The implication is that elites will have a difficult time manipulating citizens with frames because their opponent's frame will counteract the elite's frame. The results suggest that framing experiments that expose participants to only one frame or another may overstate the extent of the effect.

However, an important question for Sniderman and Theriault is just how often do people receive both frames in equal quantity (as in their study). Answering this question will ultimately entail careful content analyses of political and media discourse. Some work along these lines suggests that frames vary in the pervasiveness depending on who sponsors the frame (e.g., which politicians promote the frame), media practices (e.g., how do journalists choose frames), and cultural resonances (e.g., does the frame resonate with larger cultural themes; Gamson and Modigliani, 1987, pp. 163–170; also see Ball-Rokeach et al., 1990). Similarly, Silverstein (2000) argues that some frames will have a privileged status because the Supreme Court uses that

frame in writing its opinion. For example, the free speech frame used in *Buckley* v. *Valeo* has made it particularly difficult for proponents of campaign finance reform to reframe the issue as one of democratic corruption. This is not to say that people will never be exposed to frames in near equal quantities; however, at least some of the time, we can expect significant variations in the pervasiveness of different frames. Future work is needed to build on Sniderman and Theriault's results by examining how people react to multiple frames in differing quantities (also see Kuklinski et al., 2000, p. 811).

To summarize, the evidence to date suggests that emphasis framing effects do not work through an automatic accessibility process. An implication is that there are deliberate limits to framing effects, and scholars have begun to document individual, source, and contextual limits. While many questions remain, much of this evidence suggests that citizens use frames in a systematic and well-reasoned manner.

CONCLUSION

> Clearly, the development of a theory of framing is badly needed. (Payne, Bettman, and Johnson, 1993, p. 66)

The study of framing effects has a rich intellectual legacy, dating back to Laswell, and Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee and including such influential scholars as Tversky and Kahneman, and Goffman. Researchers have documented a wide array of framing effects in numerous contexts. Many take these demonstrations as evidence that citizens either base their preferences on arbitrary information and/or are subject to extensive elite manipulation (e.g., Bartels, 1998; Entman, 1993; Riker, 1986).

Despite the intellectual lineage, however, scholars are just beginning to have an understanding of what framing effects are, and how and when they occur. An important step towards advancing our knowledge is to arrive at a consensus on how to use the terms framing and framing effects. I have suggested that, at this point, it is analytically useful to distinguish between two types of framing effects (equivalency framing effects and emphasis framing effects), as these two effects have different implications and may work differently.

Examples of equivalency framing effects demonstrate cases of incompetence. However, we continue to know little about the political conditions under which these effects occur. The evidence to date (from psychology and Sniderman, 2000) suggests that equivalency framing effects might occur less often than typically assumed. The most that can be said at this point is that

there exist isolated cases of political incompetence due to equivalency framing effects.

Emphasis framing effects undoubtedly play a significant role in politics; politicians, activists, and the media constantly frame issues in one way or another (Freedman, 2000; Jacoby, 2000). The initial work on emphasis framing effects suggested that elites had considerable leverage in using frames to manipulate citizens' preferences. However, we now know much more about how and when emphasis framing effects occur, and it seems that these initial concerns were unwarranted. Citizens appear to consciously weigh the considerations suggested by elite frames, compare these considerations to their predispositions and information, and contemplate about the source of the frame. This all suggests that citizens deal with elite frames in a relatively competent and well-reasoned manner.

In short, framing effects are remarkably complex. Sometimes they work and other times they do not, and, despite common practice, it is just as important to document cases of failed framing effects as successful framing effects (see, e.g., Alvarez and Brehm, 2000, p. 21). Sometimes framing effects serve as evidence of incompetence and other times they do not.

What is needed is a unifying theory or framework to organize the wide variety of framing effect results. This is particularly important because of the fragmented nature of the literature; indeed, as should be apparent, much research on framing effects proceeds with little attempt to connect itself to other related work. The result is a series of tangentially connected findings about how and when different types of framing effects work. The problem with this approach is that it leaves unclear which limits apply when and just how robust different limits are under varying conditions. This, in turn, makes it difficult to devise techniques for facilitating competent preference formation.

A goal of this essay has been to serve as a first step in unifying work on framing effects in light of their implications for citizen competence. A logical next step is to develop a more complete understanding of the psychological processes underlying the different types of framing effects (e.g., what is the role of accessibility?). Fortunately, Nelson and his colleagues have laid an impressive foundation for an understanding of the psychology of emphasis framing effects while Levin et al. (1998) have done the same for equivalency framing effects. This work needs to be expanded so that we can predict when certain limits will be relevant, given the psychological processes. This then needs to be complemented with a consideration of the strategic elements of framing—clearly, many elites employ frames strategically, and we are only beginning to understand how this process works. Promising steps in this direction are provided by Riker's (1986, 1996, pp. 99–109; also see Petrocik, 1996) theory of heresthetics and by Chong's (1996, 2000, pp. 116–152) theory of cultural mobilization (also see work on social movements and framing; e.g.,

Zald, 1996). In the end, an understanding of framing requires linking how citizens psychologically process frames with how elites strategically choose frames.

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NOTES

1. Scheufele (1999) offers a broader treatment of framing research by developing a process model that includes not only framing effects (or what he calls "frame setting"), but also other processes such as "frame building" (e.g., how speakers, particularly the media, construct frames in communication).
2. Levin et al. (1998) identify three types of equivalency framing effects that are distinguished, in part, by if they affect risk preferences, evaluations, or behaviors.
3. I do not address related phenomena such as preference reversals due to elicitation procedures (Tversky and Thaler, 1990), or independence of preferences from irrelevant alternatives (Lacy, 1997). These effects are less clearly relevant for citizen competence; moreover, despite occasional arguments to the contrary, these phenomena seem qualitatively distinct from framing effects.
4. Some of this work embeds the alternative frames in surveys (Kinder and Sanders, 1990, 1996; Nelson and Kinder, 1996). This is done by writing different questions that make reference to distinctive considerations (that are not objectively identical; see Kinder and Sanders, 1990, p. 75). I see this as different from the previously discussed work on survey question wording effects where the wordings are presumably equivalent.
5. Other scholars have examined different reactions to emphasis framing including causal attributions (Haider-Markel and Joslyn, 2001a; Iyengar, 1991), emotional responses (Brewer, 2000; Gross and D'Ambrosio, 1999), open-ended cognitive responses (Price, Tewksbury, and Powers, 1997), responses represented in post-exposure narratives (Rhee, 1997), perceptions of public opinion (Joslyn and Haider-Markel, 2001), and aggregate public opinion trends (Kellstedt, 2000). Also, Berinsky and Kinder (2000) offer compelling evidence that frames (with identical informational content) can affect the way in which citizens understand issues. Finally, note that underlying an emphasis framing effect is the idea that citizens experience ambivalence about which considerations to focus on when making political and social judgments (Alvarez and Brehm, 1995; Chong, 1993; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock, 1991, pp. 49–51; Tetlock, 1986; Zaller, 1992). See Alvarez and Brehm (1997, 1998) for an incisive discussion of ambivalence and related concepts, and Alvarez and Brehm (2000) for a discussion of ambivalence and emphasis framing.
6. I thank an anonymous reviewer for making this point. Also see Schuman and Ludwig (1983, pp. 112, 119) on the theoretical distinction between survey question wording effects and survey question order effects.
7. Agenda setting, media priming, and persuasion are distinct but related concepts to framing (see, e.g., Scheufele, 2000). The independent variable for a framing effect is the description of an issue, an event, a campaign, or a problem, whereas the independent variable for agenda

setting and media priming is emphasis on an issue or problem. The dependent variable for a framing effect is the criteria on which an issue or problem is judged (and/or the decision outcome). This is similar to the dependent variable for media priming which is typically the criteria that underlies one's evaluation of a political leader (Miller and Krosnick, 2000). The dependent variable for agenda setting, however, is one's overall assessment of what problems are important. Nelson and Oxley (1999) explain that emphasis framing differs from persuasion in that the former involves alterations in which considerations are seen as relevant (e.g., when thinking of a new housing project, are economic or environmental considerations more important?) whereas the latter involves evaluations based on those considerations (will the economic impact be positive or negative?).

8. When invariance fails, it is often said that individuals construct their preferences. From a positive perspective, this means that we must build a theory to explain the construction process. However, from a normative perspective, it suggests that preferences expressed by citizens may simply be the product of arbitrary information. This is problematic for theories of democracy and citizen competence insofar as if governors respond to such constructed preferences, they may not be responding at all to actual citizen desires (Payne, Bettman, and Johnson, 1993, pp. 4–8).
9. I opt for this fairly minimal conception of elite manipulation, in part, because I see it as sufficient for the discussion that follows. I acknowledge that in so doing, I am evading difficult questions about operationalization (in some contexts) and broader conceptualization.
10. A consideration becomes increasingly (temporarily) accessible as it becomes easier to retrieve from memory (Bargh, Bond, Lombardi, and Tota, 1986; Fazio, 1995, pp. 248–249). Advocates of the accessibility approach recognize that not all individuals will be influenced in the same way, as individuals differ in their exposure to different frames, and in which considerations are chronically accessible (see, e.g., Iyengar, 1990, p. 11, 1991, p. 132).
11. See Boettcher (2000) for an analogous argument in the context of foreign policy decision-making.
12. The reported results only include partisans. Not surprisingly, Independents exhibited increased susceptibility to framing effects when party cues were offered. See Druckman (2001b, pp. 72–73) for details.
13. Another question is how often people receive such clear cues (Kuklinski and Quirk, 2000).
14. Social psychologists have implemented many variations of this basic experiment, and have discovered various conditions under which accessibility effects do and do not occur (Bargh and Pietromonaco, 1982; Bargh et al., 1986; Fazio, 1995; Herr, 1986; Krosnick, 1989; Martin and Achee, 1992; Stapel, Koomen, and Zeelenberg, 1998; Wyer and Srull, 1989).
15. My focus is on cases where elites engage in emphasis framing. Recall that I earlier classified survey question order effects as an example of an emphasis framing effect; some evidence suggests that order effects do in fact work through an accessibility process (e.g., Tourangeau et al., 1989). However, Lacy (1997) presents a provocative model to explain survey question order effects where people maintain stable nonseparable preferences. Nonseparable preferences mean that a person's "preference on one issue depends on the outcome of or options available on other issues. In the lexicon of public opinion, nonseparable preferences can be thought of as conditional opinions" (Lacy, 1997, p. 1). In this perspective, the question order example previously described reflects the fact that preferences about Communist access are contingent on American access. Lacy (1997, p. 20) concludes that "When people have fixed and well-formed [nonseparable] preferences, they may exhibit the same responses to public opinion surveys that researchers most often cite as evidence refuting the assumption of fixed preferences . . . it is premature to conclude from evidence of framing or response instability that people lack stable preferences." Also see Schuman and Ludwig (1983, pp. 116, 118) for related discussion as well as speculation about moderators.

16. Also see Jacoby (2000, p. 758) who finds no effect for sophistication in his study of framing and government spending.
17. A pretest with representative participants showed that participants viewed these sources as credible and noncredible, respectively. Also, note that this framing experiment differs from work on persuasion and source credibility (e.g., Petty and Wegener, 1998, pp. 344–345), since framing and persuasion are distinct processes (Nelson and Oxley, 1999).
18. Of course, several questions remain. How credible does a speaker need to be in order to engage in successful framing? How do individuals arrive at credibility judgments? Also, Kuklinski and Hurley (1994, 1996) show that people may not form credibility judgments accurately. Also see Haider-Markel and Joslyn (2001b).

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